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International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination

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OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
Fortieth session

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION

Eleventh periodic reports of States parties due in 1990

Addendum

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC*

[29 May 1991]

1. The Syrian Constitution contains the following undertakings: Freedom is a sacred right. The State shall guarantee the personal freedom and safeguard the dignity and security of its citizens. The rule of law is a basic principle of society and the State. Citizens are equal before the law in regard to their rights and obligations. The State shall observe the principle of equal

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* The present report constitutes the ninth, tenth and eleventh periodic reports of the Syrian Arab Republic, due on 20 May 1986, 20 May 1988 and 20 May 1990 respectively, submitted in one document.

For the seventh and eighth periodic reports submitted by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the summary records of the meetings of the Committee at which those reports were considered, see:

Seventh periodic report - CERD/C/91/Add.36 (CERD/C/SR.661-662)
Eighth periodic report - CERD/C/118/Add.32 (CERD/C/SR.817).

opportunities for citizens. Every citizen shall have the right to participate in the country's political, economic, social and cultural life. The State shall also ensure that women enjoy every opportunity for full and effective participation in political, social, cultural and economic life and shall endeavour to remove the obstacles that are impeding their advancement and their participation in social development. Freedom of belief shall be safeguarded. The State shall respect all religions and shall guarantee freedom of all forms of religious observance. The State shall endeavour to ensure that employment opportunities are available for all its citizens. Every citizen has the right to express his opinion publicly and freely either orally, in writing or through any other form of expression and to participate in the task of supervision and constructive criticism. All citizens enjoy the right to peaceful assembly and demonstration.

2. The Syrian Penal Code contains provisions that prescribe severe penalties for any action and any written or spoken statement the purpose or result of which is the instigation of confessional or racial bigotry or the provocation of conflict among the various communities and component elements of the nation.

Article 207 of the Penal Code stipulates as follows:

"1. Any act or written or oral communication that is intended to instigate confessional or racial bigotry or provoke conflict among the various communities and component elements of the nation, or which results in such instigation or provocation, is punishable by a term of six months to two years' imprisonment, together with a fine of 100 to 200 pounds and deprival of the rights specified in the second and fourth paragraphs of article 65."

Article 65 reads as follows:

"Any person sentenced to imprisonment or restricted residence for a criminal offence shall be prohibited from exercising the following civil rights throughout the period of his sentence:

(a) The right to assume public office or public service;

(b) The right to assume office or serve in the administration of the civil affairs of his community or in the management of the professional association to which he belongs;

(c) The right to vote or stand as a candidate in elections to any governmental body;

(d) The right to vote or stand as a candidate in any community organizations or professional associations;

(e) The right to wear Syrian or foreign medals of honour."

3. Since achieving its independence in 1946, the Syrian Arab Republic has pursued a firm policy of opposition on principle to all forms of racial discrimination and similar ideologies, such as nazism and fascism, which are based on racism, racial or ethnic intolerance, hatred and terror. The

Permanent Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic, all Syrian legislation and the decisions taken at the congresses of the Arab Baath Socialist Party, by which the country has been guided since 1963, pay special attention to the need constantly to combat and condemn such totalitarian and racist ideologies and practices. Syria's participation in the promulgation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its accession to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid are clear indications of the Syrian Government's attitude towards ideologies and practices based on intolerance, hatred and the systematic denial of human rights.

4. The Syrian Arab Republic has always condemned racist regimes throughout the world, particularly the South African regime with which it maintains no relations whatsoever and which it regards as guilty of a crime against humanity. The Syrian Arab Republic has repeatedly called upon the international community to put an end to that regime's racist and totalitarian practices in flagrant defiance of the international will, the Charter of the United Nations and human rights instruments, and supports international measures to suppress and punish the crime of apartheid. Syria also supports all the national and international forces, movements and bodies which condemn racial discrimination, particularly the apartheid regime in South Africa. The Syrian information media take every opportunity to condemn the acts of that odious regime and the educational programmes at the State schools highlight the dangers posed by racist policies and apartheid.

5. Syrian law and legislation prohibit all forms of propaganda and associations based on concepts and theories advocating the supremacy of any race or any group of a particular colour or ethnic origin or which attempt to promote any form of racial hatred or discrimination. It is also prohibited to establish any organization for the purpose of promoting racist ideology or instigating racial discrimination.

6. Syria has always condemned the various forms of economic, technological and military support which transnational corporations extend to the hateful racist regime in South Africa to the evident detriment of international peace and security.

7. The Permanent Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic contains the following provisions:

Article 25, paragraph 3: All citizens are equal before the law in regard to their rights and obligations.

Article 25, paragraph 1: Freedom is a sacred right and the State shall guarantee the personal freedom and safeguard the dignity and security of its citizens.

Article 26: Every citizen has the right to participate in the country's political, economic, social and cultural life and this right shall be regulated by law.

Article 33, paragraph 1: No citizen shall be expelled from the territory of his homeland.

Article 33, paragraph 2: Every citizen has the right to freedom of movement in the territory of the State, unless prohibited therefrom under the terms of a court order or public health and safety regulations.

Article 43: The law shall regulate the granting of Syrian Arab nationality and shall accord special facilities to Syrian Arab expatriates and their children and to nationals of Arab countries.

Article 44, paragraph 2: The State shall protect and encourage marriage and shall endeavour to remove the material and social obstacles impeding it. The State shall also protect mothers and children, cater for the welfare of the rising generation and youth and provide an environment conducive to the development of their talents.

Article 14, paragraph 2: The law shall regulate, protect and support collective property, comprising assets belonging to popular and professional organizations, production units, cooperative associations and other social institutions.

Article 14, paragraph 3: The law shall define the social function of private property, comprising the assets of individuals, in a manner conducive to the interests of the national economy and within the framework of the Development Plan, in order to ensure that it is not used in any way that might prejudice the interests of the people.

Article 17: The right of succession is guaranteed in accordance with the law.

Article 35, paragraph 1: Freedom of belief shall be safeguarded and the State shall respect all religions.

Article 35, paragraph 2: The State shall guarantee freedom to engage in all religious observances in a manner consistent with public order.

Article 38: Every citizen has the right to express his opinion freely and openly, either orally, in writing or through any other means of expression, and to participate in supervision and constructive criticism in a manner conducive to the proper development of the country and the nation. The State shall guarantee freedom of the press, printing and publication in accordance with the law.

Article 39: Citizens have the right to peaceful assembly and demonstration within the limits of the principles embodied in the Constitution. Exercise of this right shall be regulated by law.

Article 36, paragraph 1: Work is a right and also a duty of every citizen and the State shall endeavour to ensure that employment opportunities are available for all its citizens.

Article 36, paragraph 2: Every citizen has the right to receive a wage commensurate with the quality of his work and his productivity, and this wage shall be guaranteed by the State.

Article 36, paragraph 3: The State shall stipulate the number of working hours, provide social security for workers and regulate their right to rest periods, holidays, compensation and other benefits.

Article 9: Popular organizations and cooperative associations include the popular forces that are working to develop society and further the interests of its members.

Article 31: Homes are inviolable and shall not be entered or searched except in the circumstances prescribed by law.

Article 46, paragraph 2: The State shall protect the health of its citizens and provide them with preventive and therapeutic care and medication.

Article 46, paragraph 2 (a): The State shall provide for every citizen and his family in cases of emergency, sickness, disability, orphanhood and old age.

Article 37: Education is a right guaranteed by the State. It is free at all stages and compulsory at the primary level. The State shall endeavour to make it compulsory at other levels and shall supervise and direct education in such a way as to link it to social and production needs.

Article 47: The State shall provide cultural, social and health services and, in particular, shall endeavour to make them available in rural areas in accordance with their needs.

8. Syrian law and legislation emphasize the importance of equality and non-discrimination among citizens, in accordance with article 25, paragraph 3, of the Permanent Constitution, which stipulates that all citizens are equal before the law in regard to their rights and obligations. The law prescribes penalties for any person who commits an act of racial discrimination and every Syrian citizen has the right of recourse to the national courts for protection if he is subjected to any form of discrimination. No such cases have ever been brought before the Syrian judiciary.

9. The Syrian Arab Republic condemns all forms of racial discrimination and supports international measures to promote mutual understanding and tolerance among nations and racial and ethnic groups. At the country level, Syria is pursuing a policy of condemning all forms of racist and discriminatory practices, as can be seen from the Constitution of its Party, its legislation, its education system and its information media.